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Junior Academic-Managers in Higher Education: an untold story?

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Professional Biography

In her academic career to date, Justine Mercer has worked at six Higher Education institutions in a wide variety of geographical locations. She is particularly interested in Higher Education leadership, and she has conducted research into faculty appraisal and the role of the academic-manager.

Junior Academic-Manager in Higher Education: an untold story?

Abstract

Purpose – This paper investigates the impact of new managerialism on junior academic-managers (defined as those having informal leadership or management roles below the level of Head of Department). It aims to discover a) whether junior academic-managers experience the same tensions as Heads of Department; b) whether distributed leadership is possible and / or desirable in Higher Education; and c) what types of support junior academic-managers might welcome.

Design / methodology / approach – The paper draws upon previous literature and a small case study of one university department in a mid-ranking UK university.

Findings – Junior academic-managers experience similar kinds of tensions to Heads of Department. Although distributed leadership is considered a necessity in Higher Education, in practice, devolved leadership is more common than genuinely distributed leadership. Junior academic-managers would benefit from the same types of support as Heads of Department, but increased administrative assistance would be particularly helpful. Some, though not all, of the tensions felt by both groups could be alleviated if HEIs adopted a modified form of workforce remodelling, similar to that being implemented in English and Welsh schools.

Research limitation / implications – the empirical data comes from within one department of one university. It is debatable how far the findings of this study are generalizable to other contexts.

Originality / value – There are relatively few studies looking at academic Heads of Department, and virtually none looking at junior academic-managers. The argument that school workforce remodelling might be adapted for the HE sector is not made elsewhere.

Keywords: Higher Education, Managerialism, Informal Leadership

Paper type: Case study

Junior Academic-Manager in Higher Education: an untold story?

Introduction

This paper looks at how *new managerialism* has affected one department in a mid-ranking UK university over a recent three-year period, arguing that the tensions Heads of Department (HoDs) have faced over the last ten years are now being confronted by more junior members of the academy, as they struggle to lead teaching programmes and research projects in an era of ever-increasing accountability, competition and work overload. It then considers how far distributed leadership might be an appropriate aspiration for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), given how heavily the concept is being promoted within the school sector. Having concluded that the differences between universities and schools make this transfer problematic, the paper goes on to consider the kinds of support junior academic-managers might need, suggesting that they would benefit from many of the same things HoDs have requested. Such requests include training (with some caveats), and plentiful opportunities to engage in informal professional development, both individually and with colleagues. The paper ends by proposing that some elements of school workforce remodelling would also be valuable to Higher Education (HE), particularly the more strategic use of support staff to reduce the time academic-managers spend on low-level administration.

New Managerialism in Higher Education

As with other concepts, new managerialism has been given subtly different labels and definitions over a number of years. Some authors use the term *managerialism*, whilst others use *new managerialism*. As Deem (2004) explains, “old” forms of public management, such as overseeing research and teaching, and leading and motivating colleagues, remain unchanged, but distinctive “new” forms of managerialism have recently emerged, including increased marketisation and greater accountability. Other writers, most notably from North America, prefer the terms *New Public Management* (NPM) and / or *Public Service Orientation* (PSO). However, in this paper, fine-grained distinctions between *managerialism*, *new managerialism*, *NPM* and *PSO* do not need to be explored, and therefore, the term *new managerialism* will be used throughout.

In essence, new managerialism is the process by which private sector practices and values are applied to public sector institutions, in a bid to make them more efficient and effective, thereby offering tax-payers greater value-for-money. It is not merely a toolkit of techniques but an ideology, with an underlying set of fundamental (though not necessarily compatible) values and beliefs, which govern action (Trowler, 1998; Pollitt, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997; Deem and Brehony, 2005). Somewhat surprisingly, it has found support from a range of political parties, appealing to both left and right-wing sensibilities (Exworthy and Halford, 1999:8; Flynn 1999:190). As a consequence, it has continued to grow, despite changes in national government, for example, from Conservative to Labour in the UK, and from Republican to Democrat (twice over) in the USA.

That said, new managerialism has not been a homogenous process across the whole of the public sector (Clarke and Newman, 1997), and even within education, it has taken different forms (Simkins, 2000), depending on a) the policy context in specific subsectors (primary, secondary, Further Education, or Higher Education); b) the relative positioning of any institution in a competitive market; c) its “cultural starting point” (Simkins, 2000:330); and d) the individual preferences and styles of particular organisational leaders and managers.

At least four inter-related strands of new managerialism are discernible from the literature cited above. The first is an increase in accountability, both internal and external. HEIs are required to monitor the quality of their teaching and research, in evermore elaborate ways. In England, HEIs have been subject to the judgements of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) since 1986, and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) since 1997. Outputs, particularly graduation rates and publication records, are measured; performance indicators, particularly targets for student recruitment and fee income, are set; and individual academics are annually appraised. Tenured positions have been replaced by open-ended contracts, and all aspects of academic life are now regularly scrutinized.

The second strand is the marketisation of HE. Universities are encouraged to compete for students, and the publication of an array of national and international League Tables leaves prospective students in no doubt about the relative rankings of different

institutions. Departments are set annual recruitment targets and funding is increased or decreased accordingly. Students are controversially recast as *consumers* and their *satisfaction* is of paramount importance.

The third strand is an increased emphasis on efficiency. Many developed countries have experienced a massification of HE, but this exponential expansion has not been matched by a corresponding per capita increase in government funding. So, HEIs have been exhorted to *do more with less*, and *provide better service at lower cost*. To this end, internal cost centres have been created, and university finance devolved to the level of the department, though, curiously, central administration usually still decides when and if new staff can be hired.

The final strand is the promotion of entrepreneurial activity, such as consultancy, and the encouragement of new alliances and partnerships with business, industry and commerce. Whereas, in the past, such alliances centred on better preparing graduates for the world of work, or furthering mutual self-interest, now their primary purpose is to generate income for the university, and enhance their competitive-edge.

The Impact of New Managerialism on Heads of Department

Several studies have looked at the role of the academic middle-manager (hereafter called the Head of Department or HoD, though of course not all academic middle-managers hold this title). These have included Hellowell and Hancock (2001); Smith (2002, 2005); Hancock and Hellowell (2003); Sotirakou (2004), Bryman (2007) and Anderson, Scott and Coates (2008). All have pointed to the tensions inherent in any position sandwiched between senior management and *shop-floor workers*. All have simultaneously highlighted what they see as the distinctive challenges faced by HoDs, trying to juggle teaching, research and administration.

For the 14 HoDs in Hellowell and Hancock's (2001) case study of a "newer" UK university, it mean charting a precarious path "between hierarchical control and collegiality". According to "nearly all" their interviewees, collegiality was "the most effective form of decision-making in Higher Education" (Hellowell and Hancock, 2001:190) "mainly because it was important to win the hearts and minds of staff in favour of the necessary changes if the university were to flourish" (Hellowell and

Hancock, 2001:183). However, the HoDs also recognized that “collegial processes were often bypassed, subverted, or simply ignored” (Hellowell and Hancock, 2001:188), and that this, though never desirable, might occasionally be justified if, for example, a consensus could not be reached; faculty were geographically-dispersed; or a quick decision was necessary. In addition, the HoDs in Hellowell and Hancock’s study mentioned their own feelings of vulnerability, deriving from the fact that they had such a complex and multifaceted portfolio, and so few sanctions with which to threaten under-performing staff. Because of the need to act as entrepreneurs in a competitive marketplace, internally, as well as externally, Heads sometimes “hid” information from staff within their own department, from fellow Heads within the same Faculty, and / or from more senior University administrators (Hancock and Hellowell, 2003).

The tensions found by Hellowell and Hancock are also reported by Smith (2002, 2005) and Sotirakou (2004). Smith (2005) distinguishes between UK HoDs at a chartered university (established before 1992), with a 5 star RAE rating, and a statutory university (established after 1992) with a 3B RAE rating. In the chartered university, “research permeates every aspect of the way in which the department operates” (Smith, 2005:454) and Heads, though concerned with both research and teaching, tended to focus more on the management of research, making it a priority to secure research funding, high quality publications, and the highest possible RAE rating for their department. By contrast, in the statutory university, “the course is king” (Smith, 2005:454) and Heads focused on the management of staff and administration. Both institutions were said to offer opportunities for distributed leadership, but, in the chartered university, distributed leadership was channelled through formal structures, such as membership of a committee, whereas, in the statutory university, it was more informal, often being achieved via word-of-mouth.

Sotirakou (2004) also distinguishes between what she calls the “new” and “old” UK university sectors, finding evidence of “Janusian” and “values” conflict in both types of institution, though the causes are different in the different subsectors. “Janusian” conflict involves “looking both ways – as a manager and an academic” (Sotirakou, 2004:354), and comes about because Heads cannot devote sufficient time to their “core academic work”. “Values” conflict, on the other hand, involves “the

inconsistency between what heads do in practice and what heads really count as important ... the tension between the requirements of the headship role and the heads' internal standards and values" (Sotirakou, 2004:354).

From the literature discussed above, it would seem that HoDs at both chartered and statutory universities experience a variety of tensions. Whilst they may aspire to collegiality, they recognize that this is not always possible because of the bureaucratic and competitive environments in which HEIs now operate. It is not easy for Heads in either type of university to balance the teaching and research demands made of them and their departments. They experience considerable conflict when they try to act as both managers and academics, primarily because management is seen as taking time away from teaching and / or research. They also experience conflict when they feel compelled to act in ways that contradict their own personal values and beliefs.

The Impact of New Managerialism on Junior Academic-Managers

Studies of new managerialism have tended to focus on particular levels, and to have grouped together everyone working below the level of HoD. The role of the HE programme leader or project co-ordinator has not been the subject of much research. As Bryman (2007:3) laments, following a systematic review of UK, USA and Australian refereed journals from 1985 to 2005, "there is far too little research on the variety of leadership roles that exist in universities at the departmental level". One has only to compare the research output of England's National College of School Leadership (NCSL) with its HE equivalent, The Leadership Foundation, to realize that research into compulsory schooling is much more extensive than research into HE. Even so, it is surprising that in HE, distributed leadership is rarely mentioned, and teacher / lecturer leadership hardly at all. The rest of the paper aims to address this gap, by exploring a) how far junior academic-managers experience the conflicts described above, in relation to HoDs, and, b) how far distributed leadership (so often advocated in the compulsory schooling sector) is possible and / or desirable in HE.

One Story in Three Chapters

This section describes the impact of new managerialism on one department of a mid-ranking UK University over a recent three-year period (labelled Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3). It focuses primarily upon the perceptions of junior academics involved in

course management or project leadership for the first time. Three critical, inter-related areas are explored, namely course budgeting, workload modelling, and small-scale international collaboration. This account has been deliberately labelled “one story” as it is derived from individual perceptions of unique events, and no claims to wider applicability are made. Readers can judge for themselves whether any of the events described have verisimilitude, and the extent to which the proposed solutions might work in other contexts. In order to preserve the anonymity of the institution and the participants, some contextual details have been obscured.

The first chapter of the story relates to course budgeting. Up to and including Year 1, the distance learning budget for the department was divided into just three cost centres, with the result that income and expenditure relating to several different courses were conflated. During Year 2, individual courses were disaggregated, with the stated aim of getting a better picture of how individual programmes were performing. A member of the Departmental Management Committee (DMC) circulated a budget spreadsheet that enabled course co-ordinators to manipulate different income and expenditure variables in order to see which combinations made a course financial viable. In this context, financially viable meant able to generate a fixed percentage contribution to central university costs. This contribution was deliberately labelled *a surplus* rather than *a profit*. Whether or not every teaching-related activity within the department should be required to generate this surplus was the subject of considerable debate; so, too, was whether or not the actual percentage figure was too high, given the allegedly distinctive nature of the department, with its strong focus on postgraduate, rather than undergraduate, programmes.

Most problematic of all was the mechanism by which academics’ time should be costed. Initially, information on this was scarce and contradictory. However, after several months, the same nominal daily rate began to circulate amongst course co-ordinators. There was a strong sense that this figure had been worked out on the back of the proverbial envelop, but in the absence of anything more formal, this is what course co-ordinators used.

Since the department was only just beginning to grapple with the thorny question of how much time particular teaching activities should consume, course co-ordinators

had considerable scope to manipulate the figures. Within limits, a course could be made financially viable simply by underestimating the amount of time needed to deliver it. Face-to-face lecture hours could not be fudged, but, for distance learners, there were no rules about how much on-line support students could expect, nor how many hours a tutor should spend marking a dissertation. Consequently, individual course co-ordinators submitted budget spreadsheets that were very different, even when the number of credits and mode of delivery were identical. Rather surprisingly, although course budgets continued to be disaggregated, the budget spreadsheets were not requested the following academic year.

The second chapter of the story concerns workload modelling. This was tackled at about the same time as course budgeting and in a similarly ad hoc fashion. During the first iteration of the model (Year 1), course co-ordinators were asked to estimate the number of hours their team spent on teaching classes and tutoring individuals. One *shadow hour* was allocated for each teaching hour, to cover preparation, marking, travel etc. Five months later, individuals were asked to estimate, using either percentages or hours, the amount of time they spent on teaching, research and administration. The aim stated in the accompanying documentation was to ensure research and administration time were “not compromised” and to “agree on teaching loads for next year”.

During the second iteration of the model (Year 2), course co-ordinators were again asked to estimate the number of teaching, teaching-related, and course management hours each course required. In this iteration, each teaching hour was allocated two *shadow hours*. Individuals were also asked for the same information. In some cases, course co-ordinators discussed their submissions with their teams and so the two sets of documentation matched. In other cases, the individual and course returns were not co-ordinated in any way. A few months later, course co-ordinators and individual academics were given an individualized sheet on which their earlier self-reported hours had been converted into percentages. They were then invited “to provide the percentages that you feel are most appropriate for the use of your time” in the coming academic year.

During the third iteration of the model (Year 3), the department reverted to calculating in hours, not percentages. For the first time, a member of the DMC distributed to course co-ordinators a summary of all the returns. This enabled them to see how colleagues co-ordinating similar courses (in terms of their mode of study and credit-rating) had calculated the time needed to deliver them. It also provided the most widely-respected data on the extent to which certain individuals were or were not overloaded with teaching. As a result, a member of the DMC “instructed” (their word) some heavily overloaded lecturers to transfer some of their students to part-time associate tutors “on health and safety grounds”.

The final chapter of the story involves small-scale international collaboration. In this case, members of the department were involved in a research and curriculum development project with a Russian university. The project was externally funded, but the money covered only travel, accommodation and subsistence, not staff time. Although both the university and the department had approved the funding application, the team came under pressure from the HoD to curtail the time spent on the collaboration, since it was unlikely to generate much student income or research. In a meeting to discuss a forthcoming visit by the Russian delegation, the Head was quoted as saying, “The bottom-line is that it’s people’s jobs we are talking about here”. This was interpreted to mean that time spent on the collaboration would be better spent on income-generating activity that would, in turn, safeguard academic posts. Nonetheless, a shortened visit went ahead, and the project leader recounted collecting the Russian academics from their hotel, and having one of them, a woman in her fifties, say, with tears of joy in her eyes, “I have waited forty years for this moment”.

Discussion

Do junior academics-managers experience the same tensions as Heads of Department?

The three scenarios described above clearly illustrate the impact of new managerialism on academics working below the HoD level. Courses have to be financially viable; academic time has to be accounted for; international collaboration has to be justified in terms of tangible outputs. The extent to which these three manifestations of new managerialism are positive or negative is debatable. In the

1990s, the literature was full of articles arguing that new managerialism is ill-suited to the public sector (Pollitt, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997), and highlighting its unfortunate consequences (Trow, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Elliott and Crossley, 1997; Deem, 1998; Randle and Brady, 1997a, 1997b; Currie and Vidovich, 2000). More recent articles, however, present a more mixed picture (Johnson and Deem; 2003; Deem and Brehony, 2005), and this is also true of the case described above.

Disaggregating the departmental budget into individual courses gave a clearer (though still incomplete) picture of where money was being saved or lost. Although it was deeply frustrating to work with so many unknown variables, and to wait so long for a usable model with which to cost academic time, preparing a budget spreadsheet did highlight areas of work that were excessively labour-intensive and therefore prohibitively expensive. In two cases, the decision was taken to stop offering a particular course off-campus because the group sizes were so small and the travel times so great. Likewise, although it took three iterations of the workload model to produce something even vaguely workable, there is now greater transparency about teaching loads, and a degree of consensus (albeit quite low) about how much time particular activities should take.

In both these areas (course budgeting and workload modelling), some junior academic-managers experienced conflict. In the spirit of collegiality, they wanted to be open and transparent with the DMC about their course finances and team workloads, but with an eye on the intra-departmental competition, they also wanted to ensure their particular courses were presented in the most favourable light. They were torn between the desire to reflect accurately the enormous amount of time their team devoted to the course, and the desire not to thereby render the course financially unviable. Up to a point, therefore, the game of “hide and seek” played by Hancock and Hellawell’s (2003) HoDs was also being played by some junior academic-managers.

Similarly, in the third area (small-scale international collaboration), the project leader described the same type of “values” conflict as that found in Sotirakou’s (2004) study of HoDs. The project leader believed very strongly that the purpose of HE could not be measured wholly in financial terms, and that some experiences were literally

priceless. Trow (1996:52) writes that, “Education is a process pretending to be an outcome. That is what makes all measures of educational outcomes spurious. Our impact on our students can never be fully known; it emerges over their whole lifetimes and takes various forms at different points in their lives”. In the eyes of the project leader, the same could be said of the UK-Russian collaboration.

It therefore seems fair to conclude that some of the tensions experienced by HoDs are also being felt by more junior academics-managers.

Is distributed leadership possible and / or desirable in HE?

As mentioned already, the concept of *distributed leadership* has been much debated and heavily promoted, within the school sector, albeit from a weak evidence-base (Harris, 2007). It is “without question, the latest fashionable idea to capture the imagination of those in the educational leadership field” (Harris, 2007: 315), despite its “chameleon-like quality” (Harris, 2007: 315). For Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004:28), distributed leadership occurs when “leadership is stretched over individuals in schools [sic] in a variety of ways that vary depending upon the particular leadership tasks and situations”. In similar vein, Harris (2005:258) describes it as the “harnessing and enhancing of the skills and knowledge of all those within an organisation to create a common culture that functions positively and effectively”. The first of these definitions implies that leadership flows back and forth over different people at different times; the second implies that everyone in the organisation participates. Neither of these conceptualisations of distributed leadership seems to fit what was happening in the University department described above. Instead, there seemed to be a quite limited devolution of control, extending only as far as the curriculum, the staffing of teaching, and the course non-pay budget. Although course leaders were volunteers, opportunities for informal leadership were channelled through formal structures, such as departmental committees. They were not genuinely distributed in the sense intended by Spillane, Halverson, Diamond (2004) and Harris (2005).

This finding accords with Smith’s (2005) study, mentioned above, and with the work of Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2008). Their study looked specifically at distributed leadership in HE, and involved interviews with 152 people at 12 UK HEIs. The

majority were Heads of Department, although some held more senior positions, including that of Vice-Chancellor. Curiously, given their focus, Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2008) chose not to interview anyone below the level of HoD.

Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2008:8) state that, “The majority of interviewees considered that distributed leadership was not just conceivable within the HE context, but a necessity” because leadership is “too complex and important to leave to a small group of individuals in formal roles”. However, the situations their interviewees went on to describe usually depicted “devolved leadership” rather than “emergent” or distributed leadership (Bolden et. al., 2008:20-21). In other words, formal, deliberate, top-down leadership “embedded within organisational structures” was actually more prevalent than “informal (potentially unplanned) leadership emerging from across the organisation” (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling, 2008:21). This leads the authors to conclude that, despite The Leadership Foundation’s promotion of distributed leadership (LFHE, 2004), both top-down and bottom-up approaches are needed, something Collinson and Collinson (2005) call “blended leadership”.

A similar conclusion is reached by Tsai and Beverton (2007). Drawing upon a case study involving a newly-established Department of Applied Foreign Languages at a Taiwanese university, they argue that “universities are too bottom-heavy and too resistant for a model of bottom-up management to dominate ... [and that] ... adopting top-down management for decision-making in academic communities definitely helps to introduce balance into a chaotic situation” (Tsai and Beverton, 2007:13). All of which would seem to suggest that a limited form of distributed leadership is both possible and desirable in HE, but only so long as it complements rather than replaces more hierarchical forms of leadership.

What support might be offered to junior academic-managers?

Given that the tensions faced by junior academic-managers are similar (in kind, if not degree) to those faced by HoDs, one would expect them to benefit from the same types of support. Johnson (2002:33) found that HoDs valued off-the-shelf training less than opportunities for “self-critical reflection, peer feedback and collective articulation and sharing of experience”. She therefore suggests that HoDs would benefit from a) administrative support to free up more time; b) expert advice and

technical information on topics such as employment law; c) “structured individual reflection”; d) “regular formal and informal interaction with peer groups”; and e) “a non-threatening environment for in-depth feedback” (Johnson, 2002:50). With the possible exception of b), junior academic-managers would most likely benefit from the same things.

Designated administrative support might be particularly welcome since junior academic-managers are not assigned a Personal Assistant, in the way most HoDs are. In the story described above, almost all of the administration involved in the course budgeting and workload modelling was undertaken by course leaders, and overseen by a member of the Departmental Management Committee. Some of this could have been done by a suitably-briefed and appropriately-remunerated member of support staff. This would not have alleviated the course leaders’ divided loyalties, but, at least, it would have allowed them more time for their “core academic work” (Sotirakou, 2004: 354).

Since 2003, government schools in England have been subject to a gradual process of *workforce remodelling*, the aim of which is to raise standards and reduce teacher workload by deploying teaching and support staff more effectively (DfES, 2003). As part of the Workforce Agreement signed on 15 January 2003, teachers stopped being expected to do 24 “non-teaching” tasks, such as stock-taking and invigilating exams. (An additional task has since been added so that the number is now 25.) The impact of the agreement has been the subject of intense debate (see for example, Wilkinson, 2005 and Gunter, 2007) with many authors claiming that some elements (most notably the use of unqualified cover supervisors and teaching assistants to teach whole classes) has led to a deskilling and deprofessionalisation of teachers.

It lies beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these issues further, but it is worth noting that HE lecturers are said to work almost as many hours per week as schoolteachers, but without the longer school holidays. According to Kinman and Jones (2004), 59% of UK academics work more than 45 hours per week, and 21% regularly work more than 55 hours. This compares with an average working week of 52.2 hours for English and Welsh primary teachers and 49.9 hours for secondary teachers (School Teachers Review Body, 2008). In addition, the academics in Kinman

and Jones' (2004) study complained vociferously about the amount of administration they were expected to do, with one lecturer saying "Really, I am just a very expensive clerical worker" (Kinman and Jones, 2004:23), and one professor claiming academics in his department spent up to eight hours a week photocopying. Complaints such as these, and similar ones voiced by Hancock (2007), suggest that HE might well benefit from the sort of workforce remodelling being undertaken in schools, at least in relation to administrative tasks.

Such a move would go some way towards alleviating the "Janusian" conflict described by Sotirakou (2004) as it would free up time for academics to concentrate on teaching and research. Tackling the "values" conflict described by Sotirakou (2004) may prove more elusive. Neither workforce remodelling nor staff training is likely to alleviate the tensions illustrated by the third chapter of the story above (concerning the aims of international collaboration). The sort of open, honest peer-group discussions advocated by Johnson (2002:50) may be helpful, but, given that the purpose of HE and of HEIs remains deeply contested, some degree of "values" conflict seems inevitable.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the impact of new managerialism on junior academics taking on informal management roles. It has described three chapters in the story of one department of a mid-ranking UK university. On the basis of this data, it has concluded that course co-ordinators and project leaders experience some of the same kinds of tensions as Heads of Departments, though not, of course, to the same degree. Although distributed leadership is promoted in the HE literature (LFHE, 2004), and is said by academics to be a necessity (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling, 2008:8), there is not much evidence of it in practice. Instead, a form of "blended leadership" (Collinson and Collinson, 2005) occurs, in which quite limited "devolved leadership" (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling, 2008:20) exists alongside more traditional, hierarchical leadership. Whether a more genuinely distributed form of leadership is appropriate for HE remains unclear.

The final part of the paper considered what support junior academic-managers might need, and argued that since they face similar challenges to HoDs, they would

probably benefit from similar types of support. The HoDs in Johnson's (2002) study valued informal opportunities for self-reflection, and chances to share their experiences with peers, rather than specific training courses. It may be that specific training courses are more useful for junior academic managers than for HoDs, but the one factor most likely to have the greatest impact upon both groups is a more strategic use of support staff. Many of the tasks HoDs and junior academic-managers routinely undertake do not actually require academic expertise. Therefore, some aspects of the workforce remodelling seen in English and Welsh schools could fruitfully be transferred to the HE sector. Clearly, the debate raging in schools over whether or not staff without qualified teacher status should be responsible for teaching whole classes is less relevant in HE. However, the idea of listing administrative duties that academics could no longer be expected to perform (a HE equivalent of the 25 non-teaching tasks) is certainly worthy of further consideration.

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